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(A MONTHLY MISCELLANY)

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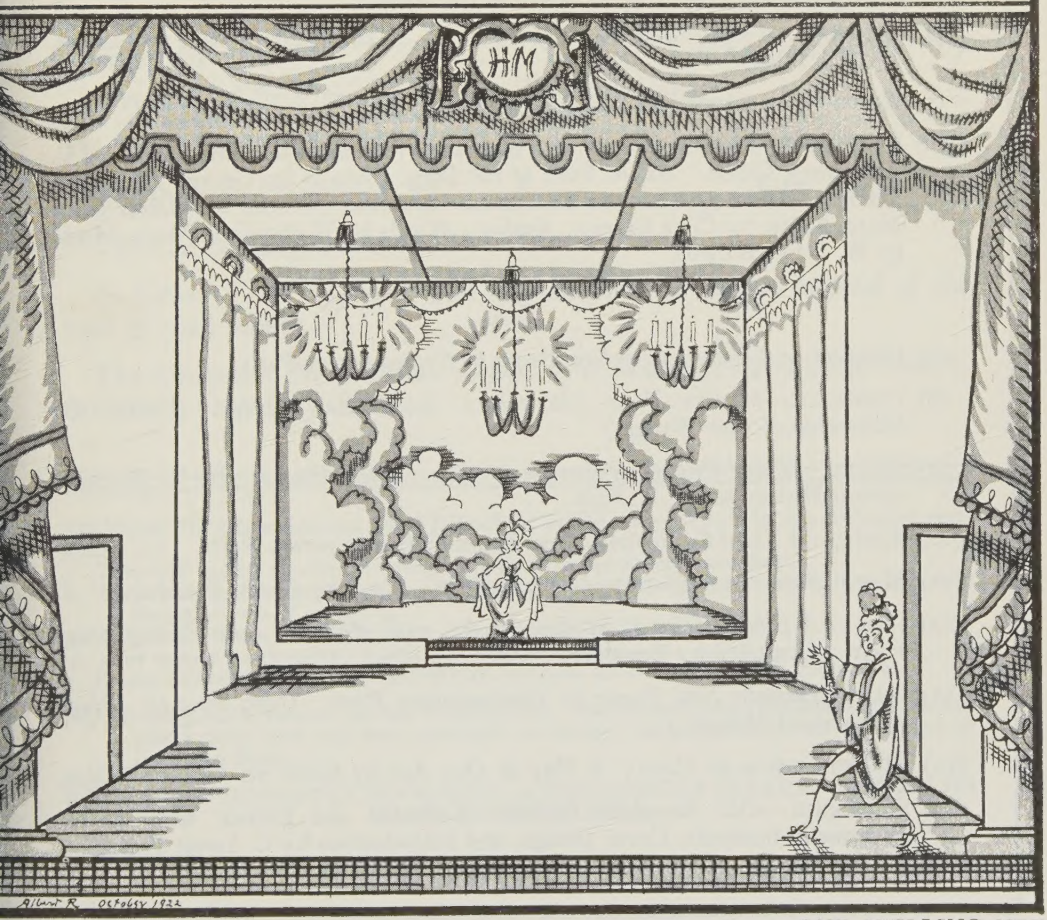

ONE SHILLING NET

THE CHAPBOOK (A Monthly Miscellany) first appeared in July, 1919. It is published on the first of each month. The following is a list of the numbers that have already appeared :

1919.

(1) JULY.—*Twenty-three New Poems by Contemporary Poets.*

(2) AUGUST.—*Decoration in the Theatre.* By Albert Rutherston. With four plates by the author.

(3) SEPTEMBER.—*Poems Newly Decorated :* An Anthology of miscellaneous poems of the past, with drawings by artists of the present.

(4) OCTOBER.—*Some French Poets of To-Day.* A commentary with specimens, by F. S. Flint.

(5) NOVEMBER.—*Rhymes for Children,* with 70 appropriate woodcuts.

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1920.

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(14) AUGUST.—*Aria da Capo* : A Play in One Act by Edna St. Vincent Millay.

(15) SEPTEMBER.—*Old Broadside Ballads.* Collected and Edited, with Reproductions in facsimile, Cover Design, and Introduction by C. Lovat Fraser.

THE CHAPBOOK
(A MONTHLY MISCELLANY)

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The Cover Designs are by Albert Rutherston.

In future The Chapbook will be published on the 1*st instead of the* 15*th of each month.*

The December Number will consist of a Morality by Harold Monro, entitled : One Day Awake.

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1. They will not be received if brought by hand to the Poetry Bookshop.
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4. They cannot be examined within any specified period.
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NOTE.—All MSS. receive careful consideration. Sometimes brief criticism is offered, but where they have not been accepted no further correspondence can be carried on regarding them.

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The Roothing

*" When the world was made, the Roothings were first made, then all the rest was added."**

THE Roothing river runs through the eight parishes called High Roothing, Aythorpe Roothing, White Roothing, Leaden Roothing, Margaret Roothing, Abbots Roothing, Berners Roothing and Beauchamp Roothing,† and so on into the Thames. Large ships take ten years to sail from its mouth to Chapel End, where it rises. The narrowest part of the River is so wide that two men cannot see across it. There is a ferryboat going between Woodbury and Clayford, but the journey is so long that it has not yet reached the other side.

The deck of the ferryboat is covered with a good crop of hay, which has sprung from the grass seeds dropped by the wildfowl that rest there at the time of their yearly flight to Egypt. The captain has a fine herd of cows grazing on the deck, but the grass is so tall that for two years he has not been able to find them. This captain is the grandson of the man who was master of the ferryboat when it left Woodbury : he is now so old that his beard has grown as long as a ship's cable.

Once, in his course, having reached Atlantis, he and his wife were making themselves ready to meet the king of that island, and the captain, who was combing his beard with a twelve-horse harrow, lost the comb in his beard, so bushy was it. But the hair of his wife was as great and large as many woods and wilds, and he, furthermore, when walking beside her, fell into it and was himself lost. Thereupon his wife shook her head to shake him out, and her hair flew round the world and up into the sky and pulled down a star.

Now her hair fell all about the earth and a wisp of it lay beside the river and grew into a great Forest which men call Topping. Many of its trees have grown up to heaven so that their tops brush

* A local saying.

† Not to name Molehill Green, little Canfield Hall, Canfield End, Little Canfield, Great Candfieldbury, Bacon End and Great Canfield, which are held of no account.

the planets in passing and keep them bright. In this Forest there was once a boy who went birds-nesting in one of the smaller hornbeam trees. He climbed the trunk for two score years before he reached the nearest branch.* On this branch there was an owl's nest. Each twig of the nest was like the trunk of an oak, and the boy climbed it from stick to stick for seven days ; when he reached the top he looked down into the nest, but the bottom was so far below that he could not see anything. He climbed down for five days and then reached the bottom, but the nest was empty. Nine-and-thirty generations of owls had hatched their eggs in it while he was climbing the tree, and the last brood had left the nest a year before.

The rabbits in Topping are very fierce and strong, and when they run wildly through the woods they can break off the lower branches of the trees with a flap of their long ears. The herons that live by the Forest pools are far larger than the rabbits. When they flap their wings the wind sweeps across Asia and blows the snow off the Himalaya mountains.

There are many farms in the Roothings, on the borders of the Forest, where the grain and the fruits grow to a great size. An ear of corn is there too large to be threshed with flails : each grain has to be dragged from the ear by a team of horses and then sawn into quarters in a sawmill before being ground. The folk in that country never taste an egg, unless they have the good fortune to find one of the eggs of the lesser wren, when they call their neighbours together and spend days and nights in feasting, until the egg is finished. A fisherman once found a hen's egg which had been broken, and launching his boat on the white, he rowed for three days towards the centre, but could not see the yolk. In the Autumn the harvesters are very busy gathering the fruit of the currant trees, but the work is dangerous : twelve new labourers were one day standing under one of the trees, when a red currant fell on their heads and killed them. The farmers suffer greatly from the bees, which often carry off their stacks of sweet hay in mistake for pollen dust. The gnats also are very hot-tempered, and if a man should disturb one while it is feeding on him, it will generally bite him in half. The

* He lived on the hard-boiled eggs of the Little Moth, which he found in the bark of the tree.

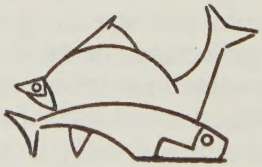
butterflies there have wings as large as the mainsail of a ship, and the draught made by the many butterflies which fly near the River is very useful to the sailors, who avail themselves of these winds—called by them " the butter winds "—to sail their huge carracks, laden with the produce of the Roothings, to the most distant countries.

There is a lake in Topping which is a hundred miles long and fifty miles wide and twenty miles deep, but the folk of Woodbury drink so heartily that there is never more than a few hundred fathoms of water in it. Because the lake is so shallow there is no room in it for any fish except lemon-soles, of which there are two that cover the entire bed. The movements of these fish cause the earthquakes that are so common in America.

The church at Woodbury has an unusually high steeple : not long after it was built it knocked a chip out of the moon as it was passing, but the gap allows the moon to pass comfortably now.

In thick weather the lambs are made to bray on the top of Yardley Hill, to warn the ships coming up the Thames. Their braying can be heard at the Nore, but when the Eldest Ram brays it breaks all the windows in Christiania : it is said he brays only when the twenty-ninth of February has fallen seven times running on a Sunday. Yet his roaring cannot be heard at Clayford, which is on the other side of the Roothing.

Edward & Gunnar JOHNSTON.



Poems by Sergei Yesienin

Prefatory Note

SERGEI YESIENIN, whose career as the poet of the revolutionary peasantry of Russia has been sedulously encouraged by the Soviet Government, is a young man of twenty-five. His childhood was spent in the government of Tula, where he roamed about the steppes as the shepherd of his father's flock. At nine years of age he received lessons in the Russian alphabet and sang in the choir of the village church. Later, the wife of a local landowner took a fancy to him and carried him away to her home in Petrograd, where he served as page. His poetic temperament and a strong desire for the freedom and adventure of the Russian steppes urged him to forsake his ordered surroundings in Petrograd and to return to his beloved plains and forests. At fourteen he was employed in farm work and cattle-droving, but the wild sap rising within him, he soon threw off all restraint, and led the life of a roamer of the steppes. Some of his experiences as a free man of nature are mentioned in his " Confessions of a Hooligan."

His contempt for all man-made laws and conventions could not fail to bring him to the notice of the Soviet Government, and he broke into poetic song at the overthrow of all established government and the promise of unbounded freedom which marked the first phase of the Soviet régime. His first poems appeared in the Soviet official newspaper, " Izviestiya," in the spring of 1918, and he was immediately acclaimed by revolutionary Russia as the spokesman of the peasants. Even his political opponents were surprised at the freshness and exactitude of his metaphors. With lavish encouragement and honour on the part of the Soviet rulers, Yesienin has published a long series of poems. His last work was a drama in verse, in which he extolled the exploits of the Volga pirate, Poogatcheff, who roused the peasants against the Empress Catherine II.

In the early part of 1922, Yesienin became the husband of Miss Isadora Duncan, the well-known American dancer, who had gone to Moscow to perform before Lenin and Trotzky. They were only able to converse by signs. The poet and the dancer left Moscow recently for a dancing tour throughout the world.

GERARD SHELLEY.

From a Hooligan's Confession

THE rain, like dripping besoms, sweeps
The willow-litter o'er the meadows ;
Spit, O rain, with bunches of leaves :
You are a hooligan like me.
I love to see the azure copses,
Like bullocks with a lumbering gait,
Their paunches creaking loud with leaves,
Steeping their trunks in Autumn mud.
Behold my chestnut-coloured herd !
Could any one sing its praises better ?
I see . . . I see . . . the grey dusk licking
The traces of the feet of men.
Russia ! my poor, log-cabin Russia !
I only am a singer and thy scribe.
The sadness of my untamed verse
Was bred on mignonette and thyme.
O midnight of the moon, come soon ;
Thou art a jug to milk the birches' pallor.
It seems to me the very graveyard yearns
To bludgeon someone with its crosses.
Black Awe roams grimly over the hills
And darts a robber's glance into our garden.
Alas ! I am myself a robber and ruffian,
A horse-thief of the steppes by blood !
What joy it is at dead of night
To watch the boiling cherries seethe like a band of warriors.
I long to stand at night amid the dove-blue steppes,
Alone somewhere with a knotted club !
Alas, my head is drooping like a bush !
A prisoner of song, my strength is sapped ;

I stand condemned, with feeling's drear hard labour,
To tread the mill of verse and song.
But have no fear, wild wind !
Spit calmly o'er the fields with leaves ;
The nickname " Poet " will not harm me,
I am in song a hooligan like you.

The Last Peasant Poet

THE last peasant poet I am,
A bridge of planks untuned to song ;
I stand at the Requiem Mass
Of birches like incense-clouds.
My body like a candle of wax
Shall burn out with a golden flame,
And the moon like a grandfather's clock
Shall grind out my night's twelfth hour.
By the path o'er the blue, blue field
An iron guest shall ride
And pluck with a coal-black hand
The oats at the golden dawn.
O lifeless, foreign hands,
My songs cannot live with you.
But the ears of the corn, like steeds,
Shall pine for their master who's gone.
And the wind shall catch up their whining
As it spreads out their Requiem robes.
Soon, soon the grandfather's clock,
Shall grind out my night's twelfth hour.

The Blue Steppe

THE far-flung steppe is blue, the cold air clear ;
Distinct and hollow sound the tapping hooves.
Into its outspread skirts the withered grass
Gathers the copper of the wind-swept trefoil.

Out from the lone ravines the grey mist creeps,
Arched like a bow and clinging to the moss ;
And Evening, rising over the river, bathes
White water on the toes of her blue feet.

* * * *

The chill of Autumn dims my golden hopes ;
My horse roams on, like sad and silent Fate,
And with his dun and scarcely moistened lip
Catches the edge of my outspreading cloak.

To some far path, though not to peace or war,
Invisible lone traces lead me on.
The day will plunge with flash of a golden heel ;
Labour will rest inside the years-old trunk.

* * * *

Like crumbling rust the bald bare hills and sand
Stretch out all red along the endless way ;
And twilight dances to the rooks' alarm
And bends the moon into a shepherd's crook.

The hamlets seem to quiver in the mist.
There is no wind ; 'tis but a gentle ringing,
While Russia drowses in her merry sadness
With hands fast tightened on the dipping steep.

* * * *

Where shall I sleep to-night ? O lodging, lodging !
How well I know your welcome to the blood !
The housewife sleeps and all the clean fresh straw
Is crushed beneath the thighs of her widowed love.

Here's Dawn at last. The Eikons in the corner
Are folded in mysterious beetle colour.
And now her morning prayer, like gentle rain,
Will patter down upon the misty glass.

* * * *

Lo, once again the blue steppe spreads before me ;
The pools rock to and fro the sun's red ray :
My heart is filled with other joys and sorrows,
And to my tongue another language clings.

Cool grows the azure like a trembling water ;
My horse roams sadly on with dangling reins.
Taking a dusky handful from her lap,
The wind throws after me her last dead leaves.

On Stage Lighting

(two notes)

I. Il Siroe : 1733.

II. Candle-light and Delicate Drama.

In 1733, *on May 2nd, " Il Siroe " is produced at Bologna in the Teatro Malvezze. It is performed until June 21st. The Music is by Hasse, the Libretto by Metastasio. Francesco Bibiena (Galli) designs the last scene, for which he is paid* 200 *lire Italiano ;* 995 *lire being spent on cloth, wood, colours, woodwork, etc., and* 434 *lire to assistant painters.* 1,548 *lire is paid for the illumination, candles and oil on the stage and in the auditorium. The total expense is* 31,572 *lire. The takings are* 26,468 *lire : loss* 5,104 *lire.*

Il Siroe : 1733

CANDLES—oil—all this sounds very untidy. But we lose so much when we want everything as we have it *now*, and fail to understand that many a thing as it was *then* was excellent, and so different from what we suppose.

To our eyes it does not seem a pretty thing to see the pale white candles dripping their grease from high chandeliers, spluttering wicks in oil lamps, smoking when not spluttering. But we have only to exert our imagination a little to reconstruct the real sight.

If 150 candles in the glare of our modern light look pale and greasy, they look nothing of the kind when in the delicate rays of their own light.

I am fond of a good deal of light, and so, as I write this, I sit in a room which burns 200 candle power's worth of light, possibly 250. It is not a very large room, so I am wasting the light. And it glares, yet I have veiled the lamps with shades. Still it is a glare. I like it. Darkness, except in some cases, is horrible to me. And where is darkness good ? In what kind of a room ? In a rich one. My room is a plain one, and that is like most modern rooms : the more light in it the richer it will feel. But in the eighteenth century

and the seventeenth the rooms were rich as rich could be. The salons, bedrooms, passages, all bristled with points which caught every ray of light. The ceilings alone were marvels of carving, gilded and coloured, which acted as reflectors to the candle-light. What wasn't a looking-glass was a lustre ; what not a lustre a spangle.

It is this which made candle-light good. This, and the darkness which also was *rich* ; for goldleaf, burnished, is as rich in its gloom as in its glitter.

At night open some door which leads into a seventeenth or eighteenth century room, gilded or silvered, and strike a match. The place will seem to go off like a firework.

Come into some chaste room devised by Puritans or Democrats and strike a match, and the only suggestion of life we receive is something like that which a drowning man receives as he sinks lower and lower in the sea.

The gilt room is of course the error of nabobs ; the other is, we know, the achievement of nobobs.

And now consider what a theatre looked like in the seventeenth and eighteenth century with some few hundred candles to light the whole building—stage, scenes, passages, auditorium and staircases. . . .

But I run up these staircases too quickly. People were more leisurely in those days. One single oil lamp at each turn to a staircase of a theatre, and that is all. Three turns, three lamplets—like those in churches, possibly placed in lanthorns securely locked with padlocks. I need hardly say " possibly," for they most certainly would have to be locked, bolted and barred to remain unstolen.

Up the staircase then—down a passage—the passage which circles the theatres and is behind the boxes ; ten lamps in each long passage . . . flickering.

We knock on the door of Box 13 and it is opened at once. We enter and make a sixth and seventh . . . for you mustn't go. This is my friend, Ferdinando Galli—this is his wife—this his son Antonio—and this Giuseppe—and this is Maria who cooks a *Pollo alla Cacciatore* better than anyone could imagine.

" This is the Editor of *Current Opinion* . . . Mr. Parker. Parker

wants to know, Ferdinando, why the passages are so dark and the staircases so dreadful. . . ."

Ferdinando never replies to a silly question, but Mrs. Ferdinando does. She is a most lively lady and very pleasant-mannered, thank God without being brilliant. " We are never brilliant here in Bologna," she says pleasantly, turning to Mr. Parker as though she had read my thoughts. " Do you find these four chandeliers give too little light ? " she asked, making Parker sit down by her.

Parker said he found it very pleasant to Mrs. Galli, and, quite puzzled that Ferdinando would give him not so much as a word, he determined to force it from him. " Say, you Buddy," said he, pulling up his chair close to Ferdinando so that the rest of us had to squeeze against the walls, " are you enjoying yourself here ? "

This was not what the Master had expected, and it therefore refreshed him. " Say, Buddy," went on Mr. Parker, pointing to the stage, " can you see a darn thing out there—— ? "

The truth is (I have to say it, for Ferdinando never opened his lips that evening), the truth is my friend Parker of the twentieth century was so tuned up to a theatre containing 6,000 candle power light in the auditorium and another 15,000 candle-power light on the stage that he couldn't bear what he took for darkness.

Now Ferdinando and I and the rest of us there were of the eighteenth century and had come from our houses at about seven o'clock while it was still fairly light, and as it grew darker had entered the Teatro Malvezzi, had waited twenty minutes in the café of the Teatro downstairs where it is rather lighter than outside, had gradually come upstairs, had strolled into our *loggia* while the chandeliers were being lighted, and had seen them pulled up and seen them stop spinning, and the walls, pillars and ceiling stop twinkling ; all this had brought a gradual increase of light to us, so that by the time the curtain rose the addition of sixty to sixty-five candles on the stage almost made day for us.

Then I had been called away suddenly by this good Parker, who said he had only three more hours to spend in Bologna, at which city he had just arrived. I had, out of politeness to him, rushed out of the box, down to the café, round by the arcades, in and out of the pillars, sought for him furiously, and at last found him, or rather

been found by him as he arrived, calm as death, after having " slipped round to see the Santa Petronus " while waiting for me to come down 365 metres from my *loggia*.

" What makes you bury yourself here ? " says he as greeting.

I like Parker's journal. *Current Opinion* is like the *Review of Reviews* which Stead started in London, only it's better . . . more glare . . . the lights turned on full . . . awfully jolly. One gets all the news one wants to get and one is grateful one gets it four weeks late ; for *Current Opinion* is a monthly journal. This getting it late tones it down. Like a shade over a lamp ; like distance from the view. And so when Parker brought me up with a jerk asking me what made me bury myself in Bologna, I felt I wanted a whole month to answer that question, to state the whole facts of the case, to put in the shadows and the high lights ; and I thought, " Anyhow, Ferdinando will answer him," and the thought made me smile so pleasantly at him that he took me by the arm and dragged me up to an oil lamp to get the full glow of my geniality.

Now a single oil lamp sends a strong shadow into those places which are hollow and lights up all bony parts, and Parker looked really rather theatrically distressed as he shook his head and again said, " You're burying yourself alive here."

What will he think of Ferdinando ? I thought ; for Ferdinando is nearly all bone ; but I cheered up at the thought of what Ferdinando would *say*, and how brilliant he would be.

So it was terrible to me then when Ferdinando refused to utter a word—refused to make European fireworks or even an ordinary show, and Parker had only another two hours left ; had to go to his hotel, eat something, pack, and catch the train ; and, indeed, when I looked round a minute later Parker was gone . . . blown out, as it were.

Ferdinando then said with deliberation, and a pause between every word : " Ecco un uomo che e morto, e non se ne dà per inteso," or in plain American : " That is a man who is dead and doesn't know it." The phrase later on was carried to America where it went into common use, but it was never used again quite in the same sense as Ferdinando had used it

* * * * *

The lights in the Malvezzi Theatre and in the San Cassiano in Venice were *sufficient*. They were soft, well-placed, and reflected from the gold that was everywhere (on the dresses even), from the sparkling fans, from the thousands of spangles which in the evening found their way in those days on to everything and gave a glow and a sparkle against colour that was rich. The face stood out.

Nowadays, by the use of too much light, we have forced the use of too much black in clothes, in woodwork, in carpets, in seats ; and against all this our faces stand out, not as of old, but like dried white figs or like paper.

It is quite necessary, all this glare in theatres. Because there is a glare in the streets at night and a glare in our houses too. And, leaving these, we have to be met by a greater glare or we grow depressed. No art is used at all . . . anywhere.

This is what I had to say about lighting.

It is not too much—but it's more than Ferdinando said to Parker.

Candlelight and Delicate Drama

And of candles. Did you ever read the novels of Disraeli ?—of course: then you remember the passages in " Contarini Fleming " about candles.

> " Lausanne," I said, " take lights into my room. I am going to bed."

I cannot say why that line thrills me so whenever I read it. I find it as dramatic as :

> " Go bid thy mistress, when my drink is ready
> She strike upon the bell."

The hurried sound of the bell to come is dramatic ; and to me, quite as dramatic as the knocking at the gate later on. And this passage of lights—candles which flicker—going to shed a glow in some dark corner of the next room is dramatic too.

You will remember the scene in " Contarini Fleming " to which this line and the passing of the candles is the conclusion. The old

valet—the young man—the suspicion of the youth that this valet is a spy.

It is drama to me, this sort of thing. Bloodless, you think. Yes, there is no blood on the floor, on the walls, on the daggers. But if it be bloodless in the other sense how is it that it is so intensely thrilling ? It has the thrill which we associate with contemplation and with great events which though great are not violent. Must there be violence before drama will out ? I not only refuse to believe this but am doubly, trebly convinced that the reverse is true—just as some fifteen years ago I had a suspicion that it was true.

The delicate light of candles, as used on the stage of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, has reminded me again of the delicate possibilities of drama ; and this has led me to Disraeli, than whom no one can be more delicate, nor more dramatic.

His dramatic moments would not bring down the house—if the house were Covent Garden—but, as we know, they brought down the other two Houses and built up the nation while doing so.

Now, I don't want to over-praise an old favourite of mine or it will be imagined I over-state and am blind ; but really it was this delicate dramatic spirit which was to be found in the Moscow Art Theatre, and none other in Europe. That was in 1906-1912.

It was not solely the violent drama which these producers, managers and actors, found dramatic. It was the long-drawn-out, the delicate drama, which they passed over to us who sat in front.

By this I do not mean the expressionless or the casual, that horribly casual off-handishness which on the English stage and the French stage is supposed to be the " natural."

For that is nothing : not natural, not dramatic, not delicate ; merely stupid, artless.

The Russian delicate drama was more like a Disraeli novel than anything else I can liken it to.

Much concentration, always slightly romantic, modern, well-dressed, yet always quiet. Long drawn out, but never tedious : a slight strain on people used to rapid and vividly coloured patches of drama—and for my part one half-hour of the Italian stage, with all its faults, gives me more real pleasure, greatly as I admire my dear Russian friends and their work.

The Italians still give me a faint touch of what in 1500 was one of the most staggering delights of Europe—its Commedia dell' Arte. The Russians give me a far-off hint of something they had inherited from China. Is that it? Anyhow, this is how it comes about that there is a tone about Disraeli's novels and the Moscow productions which is alike.

The East is no bad source for dramatic things, even if what we find is a trifle long drawn out; and we will do well to be very serious before the delicate drama which comes from such a source.

There is another reference to candles in Disraeli.

> "Light me to my room," said Venetia; "I will not disturb my mother as she is unwell."

I do not know if *all* houses to-day have gas or electricity in the bedrooms, but I can recall the impression of entering a large bedroom with candles in a sconce; the impression is sad as they move; when put down they warm up, and, growing steady, seem more cosy than lights which search every corner and are more brilliant; the eye goes where the light is concentrated and enjoys the pool of light against the surrounding blackness far more than were there no blackness to prove how good is the light.

* * * * *

If the candles stand near a picture on the wall, then all the other pictures somehow fade out, give place to let the one shine. Only their frames sparkle a little now and again; a deep repose wraps the subjects enclosed in them—utter silence.

Candles do conspire towards good manners: it is not always glaring midday with them. The voices tone down as evening comes down, people move less, the day's work is done. And I can well understand that in a quiet drama—a drama where the movements are few—an evening drama about simple and final things, a producer would bring in the use of candles once more.

E. Gordon Craig.

Townsman

THIS dwelling was prepared, furnished, decorated under my own care, for my use and my enjoyment. But I live in it one moment only at evening, that moment before I am swept away by sleep : thus I recover my kingdom in the very hour that I must abdicate.

Oh, how like these days are here to those waves of a waterfall that tumble in useless succession one upon another.

In their hurry they fulfil nothing, but are vainly scattered among the hollows of all the rocks, or at the greedy call of every necessity, or they vanish splash by splash, soaked up by the sand and lost in it.

A torrent gulps up the river ; spoils its dreams and mars its long reflections.

Things have belonged to me for years that I have not yet actually noticed. They stand there like servants, called, forgotten, but waiting.

Look at those books there, motionless, waiting for me to fulfil my intention of re-reading them.

The window rail is foreign to the arms that should lean upon it, but native to soot and to the climate.

I shall have left without having lingered ever in the neighbouring square. It lay there unappreciated ; I had guessed its charming soul : I had planned to breathe its air every evening.

As for those friends to whom I had said : " Now that we are neighbours we shall often see each other "—how many times have I so much as met them ?

I had promised myself the joy of narrowly observing my child as he grew up. He is half grown-up—and I have seen nothing.

If I am granted an hour of peace, for what can it be used but to listen in agony to the clatter of time disappearing into emptiness ?

Life in such a place is consumed in unfulfilment, and in this temporary dwelling at last one dies.

Translated by Harold Monro from the French of
CHARLES VILDRAC,
(from *Lumière*, December 1921).

(*C. M. Covell*)

The Return to Eden

IN the Garden of Eden at cool of eve
God walked alone, unseen, to grieve.

The tossing spray of blossomy bough,
The velvet ledge of daisied lawn,
That part of Himself that He knew how
To set astir in things new-born ;
The magic of colour that He had made,
Geranium red and cornflower blue,
Exotic hue and delicate shade
Of tiger-lily, and harebell blue,
This beauty God had joyed to make
Now turned Him dizzy, sick and faint
With sense of waste, and stinging ache
Of sudden loss. For were not bud,
Flower and tree, and rambling vine,
Dew-glistened grass and shady wood
Work of the Jewel-smith divine,
Filigree work wherein to set
His precious jewels, man and wife ?
This Eden setting made God fret.
Adam and Eve no longer there
The Garden seemed a tawdry waste
Unlovely, desolate, and bare.

In the garden He made, at even-time
God like a baffled poet walked,
Lost in a maze of meaningless rhyme,
Restless and pained, and grievously balked
Of His poem's soul, for out through the gate
The soul of Eden had passed at eve
Along with Adam and Love, his mate.
And God ?—He could not help but grieve.

In Eden's garden, cool and fair,
God walked, alone, His grief to bear.

The children of Heaven were out at play,
He heard the noise of their silver din.
To tired eyes, through the broad blue way
They seemed so mean, for they could not sin.
The heavenly hosts were met together
In tier on tier of flashing flame.
As clear as bells in frosty weather
The swinging lilt of their voices came.
It jarred the aching nerves of God,
He loathed the swish of beating wings.
The Angels pure and passionless
Now seemed such futile, soulless things,
The paltry fancies of his brain
That seemed to mock Him in his pain.
For Eden was his heart's delight
Before its soul went through the gate,
With Adam and Eve, one fateful night,
With banished man and Love, his mate.

In the Garden of Eden, at cool of eve,
God walked, alone, unseen, to grieve.

Along the ridge, outside the gate,
Where the hill curved down to the world below,
A man came with his tired mate
Through clumps of gorse, and hawthorn snow.
Adam it was. His skin was tanned
With many years of summer toil,
And big and horny was his hand.
His head was bowed toward the soil,
And white as dandelion clocks
That children loved in the world below.
His spirit strong as mountain rocks

Redeemed his body, worn and slow.
His face was lined and seamed with thought,
The struggle for life, the strain of years.
He looked like one whose ears had caught
The undertone of sorrow's tears.
With him walked Eve, who loved him well
Through difficult years of loss and gain.
She drooped like a faded mountain-bell
Shrivelled for want of refreshing rain.
Her face was pale. Frail folded flower,
It held the honey of folded years,
The honey of Love's unconscious power,
The honey of hope distilled from fears.
And Adam looked—he turned away,
He saw the mother in her face,
The sacrifice, the gnawing strain
Of anxious care, the shriven grace
Of one who walked alone with pain,
When Death had robbed her of her best,
This Eve, who was the first to lay
A little child against her breast.
Silent, they moved toward the gate,
These twain who could not live apart,
Silent, they moved toward the gate,
With flashing eyes, and beating heart.
The sentry looked—he had no care.
He only saw a man and wife,
Two tramps with heads unkempt and bare,
Common and soiled with the dirt of life.
He turned to drive them from the gate,
But stood stock still—as mute as stone.
He dare not move. He could not meet
The sword flash from their eyes, alone.

This common man and wife who beat
At even-time on Eden's gate,
Could it be they ? For grief and strife,
The terror of human love and shame,
The twofold knowledge of death and life,
Flashed from their eyes, like a sword of flame.
The angel cried " God ! " like a child in fright
Calls " Mother ! " when roused in the dark of night.
And what of God as He turned to greet
His Adam and Eve ? Creator, Lord,
He made them both—yet dare He meet
The terrible hurt of their souls' swift sword ?

Addendum to Chapbook 27

The contents of Chapbook No. 27 consisted of a large number of very interesting replies to three questions which were sent out by the Editor. Mr. John Bailey's answers arrived too late, but they were of such interest that it was thought that they should not be overlooked. The three questions are repeated below, each followed by Mr. Bailey's answer.

(1) *Do you think that poetry is a necessity to modern man?*

I can draw no distinction between "modern man" and ancient man in such a connection as this. Nor do I know what exactly is meant by "necessity." It is plain that many men, ancient and modern, have seemed to themselves to do very well without poetry; have, in fact, done very well without it in many relations of life: as husbands or fathers, for instance: or as blacksmiths, statesmen, or divines. But poetry is not addressed to husbands or blacksmiths. It is addressed to men. It is something a man may experience. The experience is unique: there is nothing like it and it cannot really be described. Like love and religion, it is something which those who have not experienced it can only see through an intellectual glass, darkly. But no man is truly and completely a man who has not experienced it, it and these other two, and seen them face to face.

(2) *What in modern life is the particular function of poetry as distinguished from other kinds of literature?*

The original advantage of poetry over prose was that it was much more easily learnt by heart. When few could read, the literature that could be sung or recited had an easy victory over that which could not. This advantage still to some extent remains. You can say an ode of Horace to yourself in the train, but you cannot say even a few sentences of a speech of Cicero. Nor do you particularly want to. And that is the point. Verse performs a function which no prose can perform. It is the natural dance of the soul in a mood of exaltation, and it creates something like the same mood in those who hear or read it. It repeats itself and makes every hearer

desire to repeat it. It is an escape of the spirit, of the spirit's joy or sorrow, of whatever is too intense to be contained in the body or expressed in ordinary speech. And its escape is into music : that music of speech which, unlike the music of instruments, is articulate : the only music which, in suggesting what cannot be expressed, says, and says with a unique perfection, something which can. It is one of the functions of prose to express the spirit of man : and it often does it well, and sometimes even nobly. But to express it after this fashion, the fashion of the great poets, is beyond the powers of any kind of prose.

(3) *Do you think there is any chance of verse being eventually displaced by prose, as narrative poetry apparently is being by the novel, and ballads already have been by newspaper reports?*

No. If, as urged in my answers to the first two questions, poetry is the natural and necessary activity of a part, perhaps the highest part, of human nature, it can never be superseded unless that part of our nature be destroyed. The newspaper habit to which the question alludes has done, and is doing, immense harm. I write this on a Sunday morning, and cannot but think of the thousands of houses in which the present inhabitants are reading some empty and ugly weekly newspaper as they sit, perhaps, in the very chairs in which their fathers and grandfathers read the Bible or the Pilgrim's Progress. But the diseases of the mind, like those of the body, wear themselves out. The mind has its own instincts of self-preservation. With the imagination and the soul, if we can distinguish, in this trinity, one person from another, it is what is most eternal in our nature. It will not suffer itself to be starved to death. And that means that it will never be content to accept the newspapers as a substitute for great poetry.

JOHN BAILEY.

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